



Lasionycteris noctivagans

SILVER-HAIRED BAT

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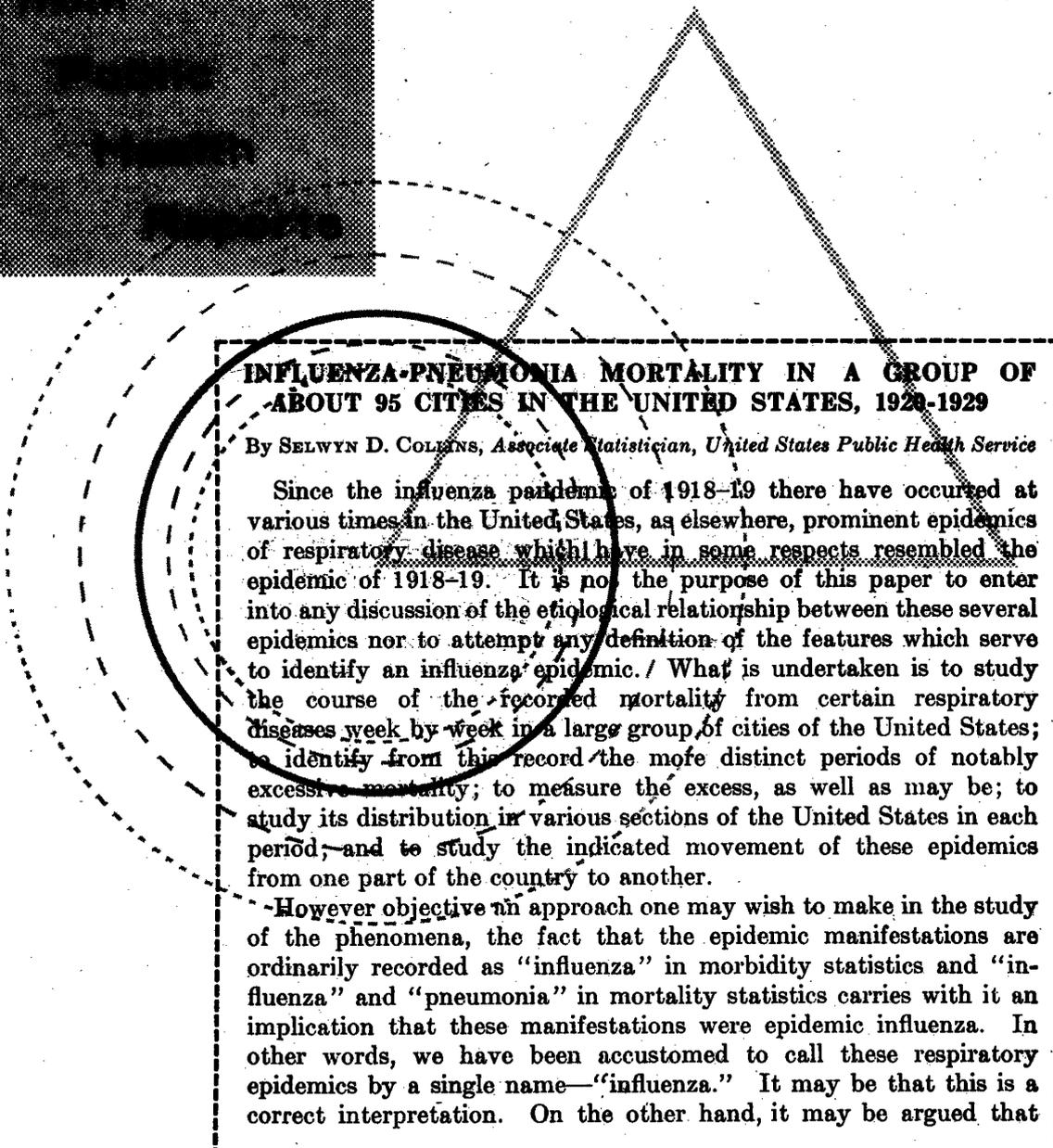
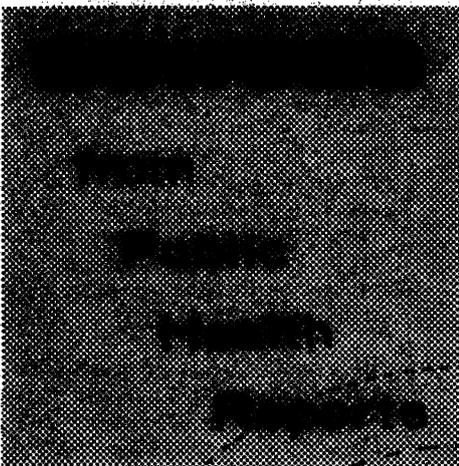
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

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INFLUENZA-PNEUMONIA MORTALITY IN A GROUP OF ABOUT 95 CITIES IN THE UNITED STATES, 1920-1929

By SELWYN D. COLLINS, *Associate Statistician, United States Public Health Service*

Since the influenza pandemic of 1918-19 there have occurred at various times in the United States, as elsewhere, prominent epidemics of respiratory disease which have in some respects resembled the epidemic of 1918-19. It is not the purpose of this paper to enter into any discussion of the etiological relationship between these several epidemics nor to attempt any definition of the features which serve to identify an influenza epidemic. What is undertaken is to study the course of the recorded mortality from certain respiratory diseases week by week in a large group of cities of the United States; to identify from this record the more distinct periods of notably excessive mortality; to measure the excess, as well as may be; to study its distribution in various sections of the United States in each period, and to study the indicated movement of these epidemics from one part of the country to another.

However objective an approach one may wish to make in the study of the phenomena, the fact that the epidemic manifestations are ordinarily recorded as "influenza" in morbidity statistics and "influenza" and "pneumonia" in mortality statistics carries with it an implication that these manifestations were epidemic influenza. In other words, we have been accustomed to call these respiratory epidemics by a single name—"influenza." It may be that this is a correct interpretation. On the other hand, it may be argued that

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Dr. Selwyn D. Collins' work on excess mortality from influenza and pneumonia forms a benchmark for current investigations of influenza. His study of trends and epidemics, extending finally through 1956, used weekly death rates which exceeded the normal seasonal expectancy for these diseases as an approximation of excess mortality in any given week.